

Sen. Wayne Morse:

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25, 1965]

A MISSTEP BY THE HOUSE

As expected, Latin Americans are burned up over the resolution by the U.S. House of Representatives favoring unilateral intervention to prevent Communist takeovers anywhere in the Western Hemisphere. Some countries have passed resolutions of their own condemning the House action. As this is written no Latin-American country had come out in support of it.

The dismay of the United States' southern neighbors is understandable. For the resolution does not merely express the feeling that the Congressmen's own country should use force to stop communism in other independent countries. Which in itself would be a dubious help to hemisphere relations even if official judgments on the degree of Communist threat were less controversial than in the recent Dominican situation.

But the House went further to say it thought any American nation was justified in stepping in when any other nation in the hemisphere was threatened. Does this mean that if Colombia thinks Venezuela is going to be taken over, the Congressmen would want Colombia to intervene? In the unlikely event that the CIA tells Washington that Canada is going Communist, would the Congressmen want their own troops to cross their northern border?

The sponsor of the resolution said its purpose was "to make clear to Communists that they cannot count on the principle of non-intervention to shield their takeover of a hemisphere country." It is not intended to be binding on the administration.

We share the feeling that Communists should know the United States and its allies are resolute in opposition to Communist takeover. However, the role of the House should not be to make unimplemented statements alienating lands who want to be assured that the tactics of democracy are more principled than those of communism. Rather the House should show its entirely proper concern by initiating or supporting legislation to strengthen the hand of the administration in dealing with each crisis in appropriate terms—legislation to firm up the alliance rather than add further internal tensions.